

# The Keynote

Newsletter of FISTS CW Club • The International Morse Preservation Society  
Issue 2, 2011

**A Bit of  
What's Inside:**

**Q-Signals**

**A Tale of  
Two QSOs**

**WJ1B's Key  
Collection**

**PLUS:**

**Down Under  
EA Keynotes**

**On the cover: Sprint Manager,  
Gil Woodside, WA1LAD**



"When You've Worked a FISTS, You've Worked a Friend"



**When you have a question about FISTS, go to the source for the correct answer. Posting a question on a chat room or email reflector may result in a lot of opinions, but your best bet is to ask a FISTS volunteer or look in the reference issue.**

**Please put the word 'FISTS' somewhere in the title of your email. This will help the volunteer recognize that your email is important and not spam.**

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**Irene has no email capability. Some shirt sizes are sold out - check web page.**

**All other questions, including supplies, tapes for the blind, callsign/email/ postal address changes, (NO we do not get this info directly from the FCC!) general membership questions and articles for the Keynote contact Nancy Kott WZ8C, nancy@tir.com; PO Box 47, Hadley MI 48440, phone 810-797-2033, fax 810-797-5808. Please check your label for your renewal month/year - dues are \$15/year. Payable to FISTS CW Club or paypal to fists@tir.com.**



"When You've Worked a FIST, You've Worked a Friend"

## North American Memo • Issue 2, 2011

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Hi FISTS,

With my fringers crossed, we're getting back on track with The Keynote! I need your photos and articles to fill the pages. We had a terrific response last month, don't stop now. Other FISTS are interested in seeing your shack, antennas and keys, as well as reading your stories of the Good Old Days or why you decided to put forth the effort to get a ham ticket in the days of Internet and cellphones.

Hamvention will be here before we know it. FISTS will be in our usual place; in the hallway between the main arena and cafeteria. We need help with the booth - thank you to the ones who have volunteered, I'll be getting back to you if I haven't already. Your help is much appreciated. It really is a lot of fun to be on the other side of the table, chatting with the visitors and meeting other FISTS.

Please look at your mailing label, there are many "LAST ISSUE" people this month and I would like to get the list all cleaned up before Hamvention. It's much easier if we don't have to take you off the Active Members List only to reinstate you a couple months later. We're glad to have you back, of course, but if you could just take a minute to renew now it will save a lot of paperwork.

Thanks to the folks in Down Under and East Asia for sharing their newsletters with us. Enjoy and drop me a note if you have a suggestion for improvement, and keep those cards and letters coming. Now, on with your newsletter.....73 88 33 Nancy Kott WZ8C



# WELCOME TO THE NEW FISTS

Number	Callsign	First	QTH	Sponsor	Number	Callsign	First	QTH	Sponsor
15413	WA8SAN	Michael			15422	K4IJA	TOM	SC	
15414	W7GAH	JERRY	ID		15423	W6ALF	ALF	CA	W6WU
15415	WD4EIB	ROY	VA	KA8HFN	15424	W7JLM	BILL	AZ	
15416	W0CC	BOB	KS	KB0MZF	15426	AE0P	BRIAN	SD	
15417	KG0YR	DAVE	MO		15427	W2GZ	SCOTT	NY	
15418	KF5JDI	RICHARD	TX		15428	KD0MGE	STEPHEN	MN	
15419	W8NF	Dave	OR		15429	N4NQ	SID	GA	
15420	W3KEY	JEFF			15430	N5QAB	SAM	AR	
15421	WB5CXC	Larry	TX		15431	WB2JGP	RANDALL	CA	WB2FXK

## FISTS AWARDS

By Dennis K6DF

Only a few awards to report since the last Keynote. Guess everyone has been busy shoveling snow or cleaning up from all the rain out west. One reason for the small number of awards might be from the recent problems we have had with the fistsawards e-mail address. The [fistsawards@fists.org](mailto:fistsawards@fists.org) e-mail address has had a few issues over the past month or so. It will get fixed some time soon . . . but until that happens please use the following e-mail address to send your award logs and questions to: [fistsawards@gmail.com](mailto:fistsawards@gmail.com)

You may use the following e-mail address, ([fistsawards@gmail.com](mailto:fistsawards@gmail.com)) for sending in your award logs. Excel, Word, Open Office, and Text files are the only file types accepted. Please read the e-mail log rules on the FISTS web site for details.

Send in complete logs for awards. That means all of the following information; Call, Date of QSO, Band, FISTS Nr., Point/s claimed for each QSO. Incomplete logs will delay receiving your award.

Check the FISTS Web Page for additional information regarding

current FISTS awards and how to apply for them: <http://www.fists.org/awards.html>

The FISTS USA Web Site has been fixed and is back up and operating . . .

If you have any questions about the awards that are not answered on the FISTS awards web page, feel free to e-mail your questions to me at [fistsawards@gmail.com](mailto:fistsawards@gmail.com)

Keep banging the brass . . . C U on the bands . . .

73, Dennis K6DF

### AWARDS ISSUED ^ Feb 20, 2011 TO Apr 5, 2011

#### Basic Century (CC)

DL9YCS

N8XMS

#### Silver

W8VIJ

#### Millionaire

G3ZOD

# QRP WITH K3WWP

*by John Shannon K3WWP*

**J**ust as FISTS is getting re-organized after the unfortunate well-documented happenings of the past couple years, I need to get my columns re-organized and back on track as well.

Of course, the last Keynote was a memorable one for me with my picture on the cover and my keys pictured on the back as well as containing my 15-year streak interview in its entirety. Thanks to all who sent such wonderful comments about it. The contents of the article have provided me with material for this column. There are some things that need explaining after re-reading it.

First, the streak of course did not end at 15 years, and it is now around 6,075 days and if all goes well will reach 17 years this August.

Secondly an explanation of the keys is in order. The front cover shows my homebrew straight key, while the back cover shows a collection of other keys. The beautiful Begali straight key and paddle were gifts to me last summer from our NAQCC members. It went something like this. NAQCC President Tom WY3H came up with the idea, unbeknownst to me of asking members to make a small donation so he could purchase a nice simple straight key to present to me to thank me for the things I

do in helping to run the NAQCC. As Tom and I both did when we started the club and vastly underestimated how many members we would have (we guessed 50 to 100, it's currently 5,450 plus), this time he vastly underestimated the number of donations and the amount he would collect. The generosity of the NAQCC members allowed him to purchase not the simple straight key, but two items from Begali, the Begali Blade Straight Key, and the Begali Magnetic Classic Paddle, plus have money left over to purchase a gift certificate to a very nice local restaurant. Yes, eating is another hobby of mine. HI.

Anyway I mention that here because many NAQCC members are also members of FISTS since our two clubs exist for much the same reasons but with the difference that the NAQCC is a QRP/CW club while FISTS is a CW club so that our activities do not conflict with nor copy each other. Obviously I couldn't thank all who donated for the keys personally. In fact I don't even know who they all are. Thus if you are among the donors and didn't receive my thanks via my web site diary nor the NAQCC online newsletter, I want to take this opportunity to thank you here in the Keynote. I certainly appreci-

ate the keys and the gift certificate, but more so, I appreciate the feelings and sentiment behind your generous donations.

At the end of the interview, I mentioned that this column would describe another streak-within-a-streak. I'll do that now.

Back in May of 2010, the NAQCC had as its monthly challenge, making QSO's with milliwatt power (less than 1 watt). I decided I'd try to get at least one mW QSO each day of the month. Not all that long before that, I had built an RF attenuator that when inserted between my rig and antenna tuner cut my 5 watts down to 930 mW which is what I used for the challenge. At that time I could only use the attenuator with the tuner so I was limited to 160-30 meters for mW power.

I easily made my goal of a mW QSO per day. So easily in fact, I decided to keep going after May ended. As I write this, it's March 26, and in 35 days the mW streak will reach a full year.

A few months ago, I rearranged my antenna switching setup so I could switch in the attenuator on any band from 160 through 6 meters. That more or less coincided with the awakening of the Sun from its long slumber which 'turned on' the higher frequency

bands again. Now I was experiencing the thrill of DXing with QRPp (mW) power. I made 62 DX QSO's in the ARRL DX contest in February. Some of the more exciting ones being working Hawaii, Cape Verde, and many EU countries.

Counting countries previously worked years ago with mW power from my homebrew transmitters, I

now stand at 62 countries worked and I hope to make it to 100 by the end of 2011. In the Russian DX contest a couple weeks ago, I completed my mW WAC working RW0CWA and R0QA from Asiatic Russia. Working KH6 with mW and more recently North Dakota with mW brought me to 49 mW states, needing KL7 to complete a mW WAS.

All of this is further proof of the greatness and efficiency of CW as an operating mode. I've said this often, but it bears repeating. If you live in a situation where you can't run high power or put up big antennas, you can still succeed and have fun doing so with CW, QRP, and simple wire antennas. I believe I've proved that over the past almost 20 years now.



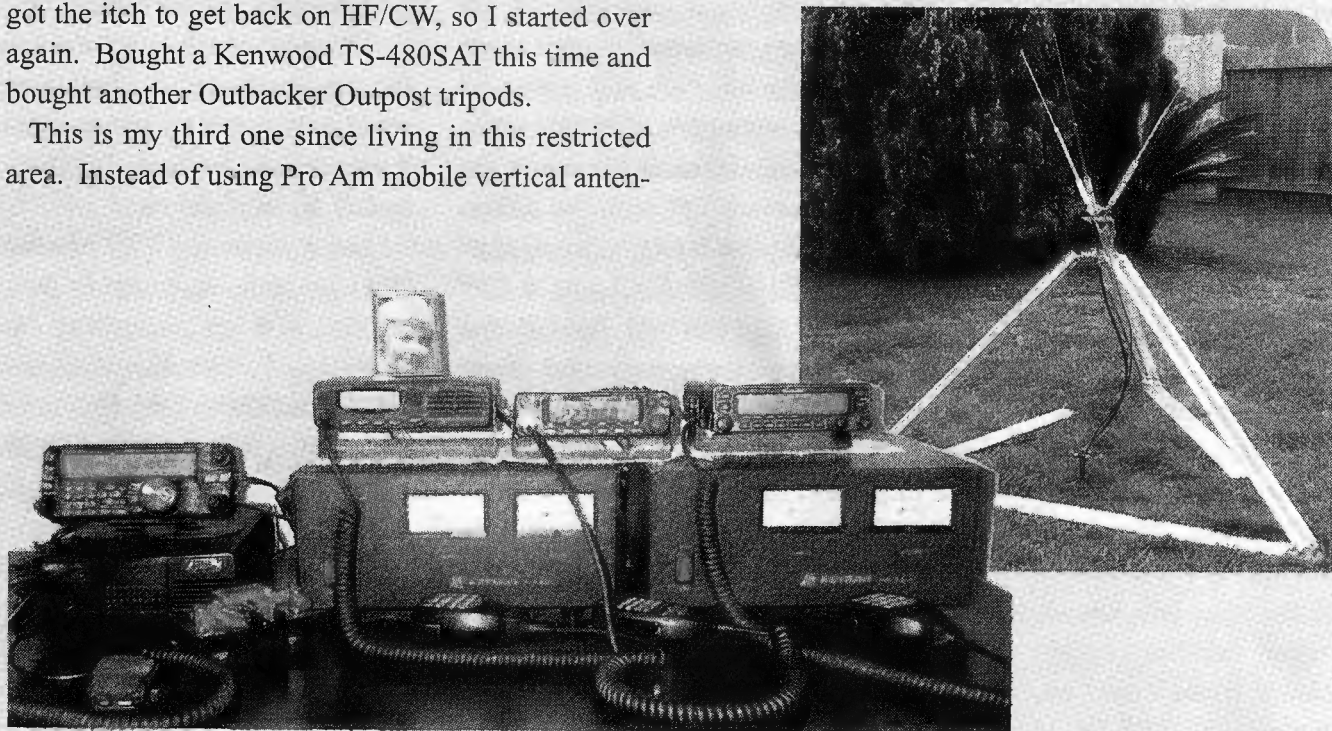
## AN ANTENNA RESTRICTION WORK-AROUND

**D**on Zelenka, W5AJX, FISTS #9361 is back on the air and sends along photos of his new antenna and rig setup. Welcome back, Don!

He writes, "For 10 years or so I was working mostly digital, PSK31, RTTY, etc. I got tied of the setup so I sold my RigBlaster and donated my Icom setup and all my Pro Am antennas to a local ham club. I kind of got the itch to get back on HF/CW, so I started over again. Bought a Kenwood TS-480SAT this time and bought another Outbacker Outpost tripods.

This is my third one since living in this restricted area. Instead of using Pro Am mobile vertical anten-

nas I bought Hustler mobile verticals. I now am capable of working HF, 6 meters, 2, 222, and 440 MHz. Restrictions will not stop me. I will be getting back to my old favorite mode, CW, so you will be hearing me from time to time if conditions permit.



# QRS MEANS SLOW DOWN!

*Tomas David Hood NW7US*

In the world of my radio communications hobby, my first love is Morse code via CW mode. And, my first love is the Navy WWII flameproof signaling key as seen in the attached photograph. I joined FISTS because of my deep love of Morse code, and my deep desire to grow in my skill and proficiency in the art of telegraphy. I have a little bit of frustration with FISTS, though. Let me explain.

Because of a mix of vague issues in my life (mostly medical issues), I have had some difficulty in increasing my copying speed. I've achieved the 20+ wpm once in my life, in order to obtain my Extra-class ticket (at the time when I took that license element, they still required the top speed.) But, I could not maintain that skill because I had medical issues that set me back. I'm still working on gaining my mental skills, but it is a struggle!


More often than not, whenever I work a FISTS station whose operator is highly proficient and capable of sending and receiving at a higher speed than I, I could not seem to get them to slow down (QRS) enough for me to have a pleasant conversation. I've pondered this. At first, I thought that FISTS folks just feel that they need to push others as much as possible to meet higher speeds. I was put off by this

perspective of the trend. It came to the point where I "copped" an attitude of avoiding FISTS on the air...

Then it dawned on me that there could be a simple explanation as to why many FISTS don't QRS for me... it could be because, 1) their keyer speed is difficult to adjust, 2) their bug does not slow down easily enough or something along these technical reasons. It is not that the operator on the distant end is purposely trying to push me to keep up with the higher speed code, it is just simply that they cannot QRS.

So, I am going to readjust my attitude about avoiding FISTS on the air. I will attempt to give FISTS

on-air QSO opportunity; and hopefully I am gaining in my skill and speed. I hope that FISTS members can remember that some of us have disabilities that we're struggling against. I will rise above this. But, I need to have a positive and embracing environment in which to operate.

Yes, by the way, I do know that the FISTS motto is "accuracy above speed" — so I assume that many FISTS members aspire to meet my QRS request. Therefore, I will try not to be afraid of the risk of meeting new FISTS members on the air. I will report on how this fares. 



**My first love is the Navy WWII flameproof signaling key.**



# HAM RADIO, THE GREATEST HOBBY THERE IS. OR HOW I GOT BITTEN BY A PADDLE AND THE RADIO BUG!

*by Hank Dean, KU8S FISTS #10092*

I was smitten with the radio bug rather early in life, when I was a tadpole or about knee high to a duck. I watched my grandfather install a radio antenna (only he didn't call it an antenna, it was an 'aerial') on the top of our house. He connected a wire to it and ran it down the side of the house and brought it in through a window. Then he did something even stranger than that: He pounded a piece of iron pipe into the ground just underneath the window. Wrapped some wire around it and ran the end of that wire through the window as well. He then poured a bucket of water around the pipe a couple of times. I couldn't see what one had to do with the other.

Then we went into the house and there sitting in the middle of the parlor floor were two boxes. One was the radio; all shiny and new with a clean wood smell. There were knobs on the front with a funny little window with numbers on the face like a clock or watch.

There was a picture of a dog on the front that looked like he was barking into a big horn. It also said something about his master. The other box contained what I found out later to be the battery. It was almost as big as the radio. It was red and blue with picture of a black cat on the front with his paw sticking out. I think the cat's name was "EVEREADY" or something. Oh, did I mention that we didn't have electricity back then as we lived in a rural area.

The next thing I know, my grandfather stuck that battery into the back of the radio. He then connected the two wires coming through the window to the back of the radio. He walked to the front of the radio and sat down. He sat there for a minute or so just looking at it.

Ok it was curtain time, with the whole family and a neighbor looking on, my grandfather glances at my grandmother and turns it on. At first the only thing that happens is that a light behind the dial comes

on. Then slowly a hiss, then some static issues from the speaker. Then my grandfather turns one of the other knobs and a man is speaking, talking about soap or something. There was music on another station. In all we found that we could receive four or five local stations during the day. But at night, stations as far away as Tennessee, New York, Detroit, and Chicago could be heard.

That radio became to us what television is today. It was our entertainment, a source for news and weather. We heard news reporters such as Lowell Thomas, Gabriel Heater, and Edward R. Morrow put the world right in your parlor. (aka family room) The Lone Ranger, Gun Smoke, Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, and the Cisco Kid and Pauncho kept you on the edge of your seat as they went out after the bad guys fighting for justice and the American way. Sports meant baseball and boxing: Milwaukee Braves, Brooklyn Dodgers ("them



bums”), the Chicago White Sox, and the Detroit Tigers. Boxing with Joe Louis, Archie Moore and Jersey Joe Walcott to name a few.

The mothers/grandmothers had their soap operas during the day and dad had their news and sports (baseball and boxing) programs at night. Gospel and classical music played all day after church on Sunday to eat and sleep by. In spite of all the play it got, the battery seemed to last for about six (6) months or so and then had to be replaced. For the amount of joy and entertainment it provided, the price was worth it.

Many years passed until we moved into the city. This move brought about change. We got a new radio because our new house had electricity and I might add, indoor plumbing. (We’re moving on up!) So instead of that battery-powered radio on a table in the parlor, there was this big floor console with the most beautiful sound you can only dream about today. All the high-tech, solid-state gizmos in the world can never duplicate the sound that came out of the radios of the 30s and 40s.

Years later that “big radio console” would be replaced by ever smaller, cheaper radios made by such names RCA, Zenith, Crosley and Westinghouse to name a few. At one time there were two or three radios in the house. And that’s when my inquisitive nature took over. I had to find out how that thing worked. In order to do that,

I had to take it apart. I couldn’t quite figure it out, so I decided I’d better put it back together. Well my grandmother came home just as I thought I had it back together (plugged in the last tube, plug it in and turned it on! Snap! Zzz h.e!2%^&, pop, puff of smoke! Needless to say the radio did not survive the smoke test. It was toast!

Punishment was worse than any torture of the Spanish Inquisition. First there was the spanking I got from my grandmother. Then the torturous wait until my grandfather came home. He came home, got cleaned up and had dinner. He then

went to the parlor to smoke his pipe (“Prince Albert” or Mixture #79 tobacco) and read the newspaper. After that it was him, me, and the paddle. My hind end still remembers that licking. But one other thing is certain for sure — the radio bug bit me that day and I have been at it ever since. Long live radio!

Hank was an SWL in the late fifties, finally got licensed in January 17, 1963. His favorites modes are CW, PSK31, and RTTY and he loves to build stuff and experiment with antennas. His only problem is there are not enough hours in a day.



The very large battery in the center of the photo is the one referenced in the article.

# A REMARKABLE TALK — WJ1B'S KEY COLLECTION

by David Berkley, K2MUN

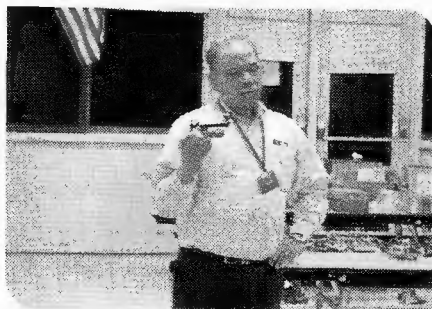
I am a member (and Vice President) of our local, Watchung Hills, NJ, amateur radio club, NPARC ([www.nparc.org](http://www.nparc.org)). During March, 2011, we had a visit and a talk by Harold Kramer (COO of the ARRL), WJ1B.

When Harold was initially invited we expected that he would want to discuss the ARRL. Instead, he said he'd like to talk about, and show us, his key and sounder collection.

When the day arrived, Harold laid out an amazing group of devices; some familiar (like a classic J38 key) and others (like a fully automatic, mechanical, dual action Melehan Valiant) that none of us had ever seen. He then gave a talk, illustrated by the keys and less familiar items, tracing the history of CW from the origins of the telegraph, through modern day. Did you know that a young Theodore Vail was deeply involved with Samuel Morse and Morse did not create the 'Morse' code by himself — I didn't? He even had a rare replica of the first Morse code key invented by Vail.

He traced the design of keys from initial creation, when keys were very tiring to use, through generations of improvement including the camelback key.

He explained that in early railroad



**Harold discusses a key used by Russian youth for training. Photos by Andy Meyer, N2FYE.**

telegraphy the sounding devices were used to print out the incoming code. But when the printers failed (which apparently was common) the telegraphers found that they could 'read' the incoming messages by just listening to the clatter of the sounders. So began human code reception.

He went on to explain why there were shorting bars on early keys (to provide a continuous circuit through the whole telegraphy system, when the key was not in use) and followed this with the story of Bill Brown who made keys by hand from 1964 to 1979. Harold also talked about another key maker, Ted McElroy, who set the world's record for Morse code telegraphy (over 70 wpm, in 1939), a record that stands to this day.

As part of this fascinating history lesson, Harold talked about collecting telegraphic apparatus. His col-

lection includes early professional keys and sounders as well as some wonderful amateur radio keys. He has a great website, at [www.wj1b.com](http://www.wj1b.com), that includes photos of prizes from the collection.

At the end of his talk, as he showed some of the more 'modern' keys in his collection, Harold (possibly somewhat nervously) let the audience, including some younger members present, play with these amazing pieces of history.



**Fiddling with Harold's amazing keys. Photos by Andy Meyer, N2FYE.**

I know I never thought about collecting keys. My shack only has my day-to-day paddles and a Bulgarian Army straight key I use when the spirit (or 'straight key day') moves me. Now I won't key up without thinking of Harold and his historic collection!



# A TALE OF TWO QSOS OR WHAT THE DICKENS HAPPENED HERE?

*By Paul McAfee, KI6OCB, FISTS #13659*

**M**y interest in Morse code got me into the world of ham radio. I studied and practiced hours, days, months; as we all know, CW is a never-ending quest for improvement.

One of the practice devices I developed is to listen to a net, one traffic net in particular, while having my TS-850's vox/man switch set to vox. When the last call comes, I send my "o" and then pretend the Net Control Station has acknowledged me, and then I send my exchange.

One night, before the net opened, I tuned up my antenna, checked my output power and SWR in preparation for the net. I thought might even have the nerve to check in. Probably not, after all, this is an NTS traffic net, serious business.

I noticed it was time for the net to open so I spun the dial over to frequency, and having checked several times on previous nights, knew that there was no need to zero beat. My dial was accurate and after all, I was only monitoring.

The net was fairly slow with only one or two pieces of traffic which I copied at about 80%, not too bad, improving each session.

NCS called for any station to check in a couple times with no takers so I decided to do my prac-

tice. Sooooo, I sent my "o".

"Gee," I thought as I keyed down, "that sounded funny." Then in my headset I heard "o" from Net Control ... OhmyGod, ohmy-God, ohmyGod! My vox switch was in the wrong position! I had been transmitting! WHAT DO I DO NOW?

It's amazing how much can run through a person's mind in a millisecond...I have to answer, they'll know who I am if I ever check in again... all the practice I've put in and I don't know what to send? Why won't my fingers move? Why is my hand shaking so badly?

Somewhere my practice paid off and I found myself sending "ge ki6ocb k"..whew, nice recovery.

From NCS came "ki6ocb name and qth?"

OK, I know this, I can do this... "de ki6ocb name is (or was that es?) paul es (or was that is?) qth (was that qth or qt5?) south (how do I spell Lake Tahoe?) lake tahoe, ca k (I think I got it).

More distracting thoughts ran through my mind, ruining my concentration. I'm glad I didn't have my bug for practice tonight! Bad enough having a shaking hand sounding dits off a straight key. Probably would sound like a machine gun running off dits if I

was working the bug.

NCS came back and I vaguely remember writing down his name, qth, and no traffic for my location, qnx.

Ok, ok, ok... just a bit more... "ki6ocb qnx (dit dit)".

I was out! I could only think of the immortal words of Charlie Brown... "Arrrgh!"

After banging my forehead on my desktop several times and reflecting on the possibilities of the FCC revoking my license for insufficient skills, my ham friends turning on me and putting my name on top of the lid list, and being refused access to any net anywhere for this poor excuse for communication I decided that a nice glass of port might help. It did, well, both of them did.

I finished my port and bid my missus g'night and went off to bed early. I knew that at least I would still have a job to go to in the morning.

Early in the morning darkness I heard a noise. Rolling over in bed to look out the window I saw a black van in the driveway. Before I could get any farther, several figures burst into the room waving M4 carbines, their red laser sight dots dancing about the room, searching out possible threats. They all settled unforgivably on my chest.



A single figure approached and, placing a knee in my chest pinning me to the bed, scowled into my face. The face was familiar... OH MY GOD! It was Staff Sergeant Gonzalez, my Senior Drill Instructor!

In his unmistakable voice he belatedly "Code Police! We got a QSD report and we're here to confiscate all CW related materials! TAKE IT ALL! MOVE!"

The figures grabbed everything as they left. Gone was my Viking Navigator, my bug, my KX1 and tuner. My wattmeter, my yet to be aligned OHR 100a, dummy loads, wire antennas, and Junker straight key.

The Gonzalez was last man out. Turning slightly in the doorway to address me he growled, "Here use this." As he tossed onto my

desktop... a hand mike. Then he was gone.

How did my wife sleep through all that commotion? Where is our "watch dog"?

Suddenly I was aware of another voice, "...all hits all the time, the best of the sixties and seventies." My alarm clock was calling. The bed sheets were sweat soaked and even though I tried to sit up I was unable to move, our Labrador had taken up a comfy position on my chest.

Whew, what a way to wake up. "Well", I thought, "better get going. Maybe I'll just put in a couple minutes of practice on my key before starting the day. Now, let's see, where did I leave that key? Hmmmm, is that a police van outside?"

## A few days later...

Operating under the ol' belief that when you get tossed from a horse the best thing to do is get right back on, on my way to bed I stopped and sent out a "CQ". We live in a pretty deep valley and early on I was concerned that the valley and mountains would be my greatest nemesis. I had learned a couple days ago that my signal was getting out, so, as I passed my rig on the way to bed in the evenings I would send out a "CQ" now and then to see if anyone would come back. Tonight someone did!

A little more relaxed than I was at a previous session, I answered the call and was able to have a nice little QSO with FISTS member Bill, W6DDB, from Southern California, and became a FISTS veteran contact for him.

He was a bit fast, but I managed to catch most of his conversation and reply fairly intelligently. Much better than at a previous session.

My hand was still a bit shaky with nerves, and my copy looked like the original hen scratching, but I had made my first "intentional" contact.

I slept better that night and I'll always remember my first two contacts and some lessons learned, or re-learned, from them.

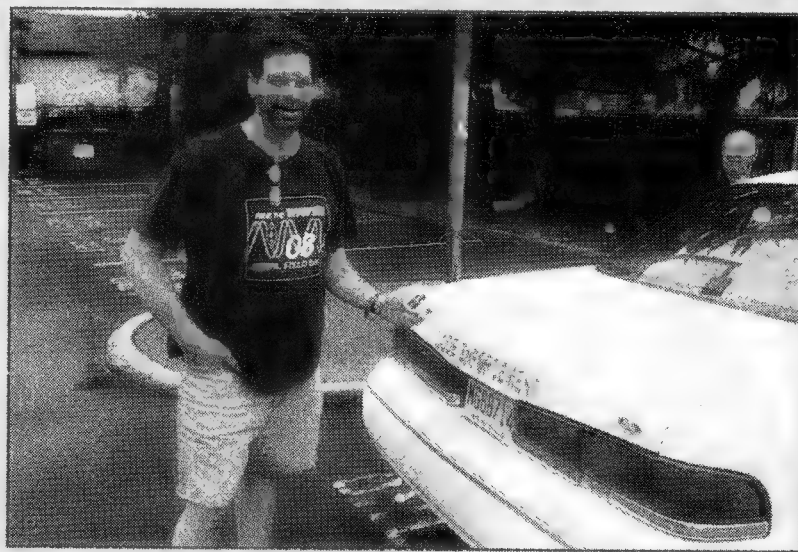
Accuracy Transcends Speed.

Relax, this is fun.

You never know who is on the key at the other end.

What a great experience this radio stuff is!

CW rules!



**New Jersey now has Official KNOW Code Enforcement, complete with a car and homebrew key, as shown by Tony, KG2GL and KC2LSD, FISTS #11793. Hey, Tony, where's your Know Code FISTS T-shirt??**

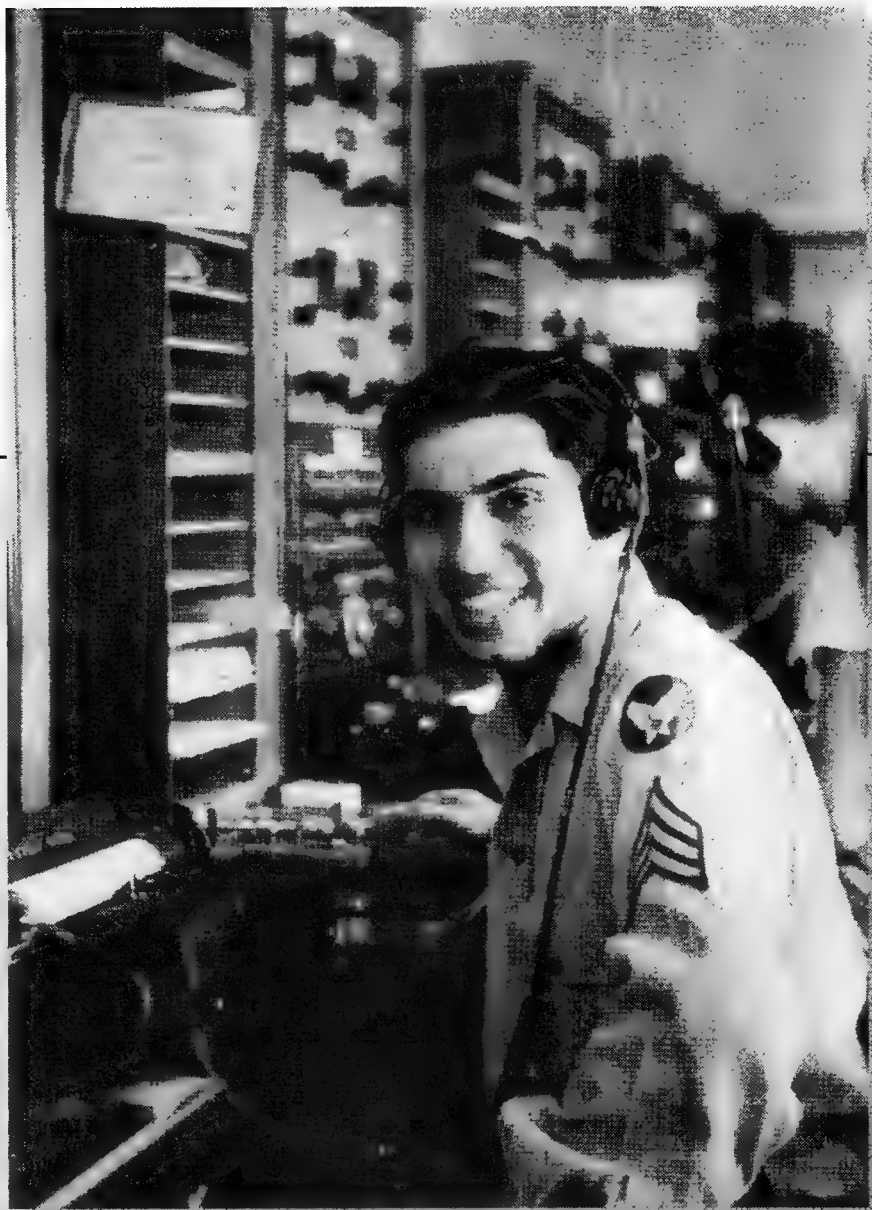


**S**idney Sosin, W7SID, formerly W9WVR, W9FM and KE7JIG sends along a photo from 1945, taken while he was operating at Payne Field, Cairo, Egypt, at the AACCS

(Army Airways Communications System) station with a handmade solid brass bug which he bought from the guy in his outfit who built it. Using that bug, Sidney was literally pounding brass! He sent and received high-speed encrypted messages (five-letter code groups, no plain text) in eight-hour shifts, 24 hours a day, to stations in Iran, Turkey, Greece, Libya and others.

Although Sidney didn't get his first amateur license until 1953, he could still copy 35 wpm when he took the code exam. Now, three months away from his 86th birthday, he is still a CW fan, although he has recently become somewhat addicted to PSK31.

Folks nowadays complain about having to practice for 15 minutes, can you imagine copying and sending letter groups for eight hours a day? Do you still have that handmade brass bug, Sidney? Looks like a beauty!



# LEARN YOUR Q-SIGNALS

I received a letter that made me realize many of the newer hams don't know the abbreviations and Q-signs (or Q-signals) that we use on CW.

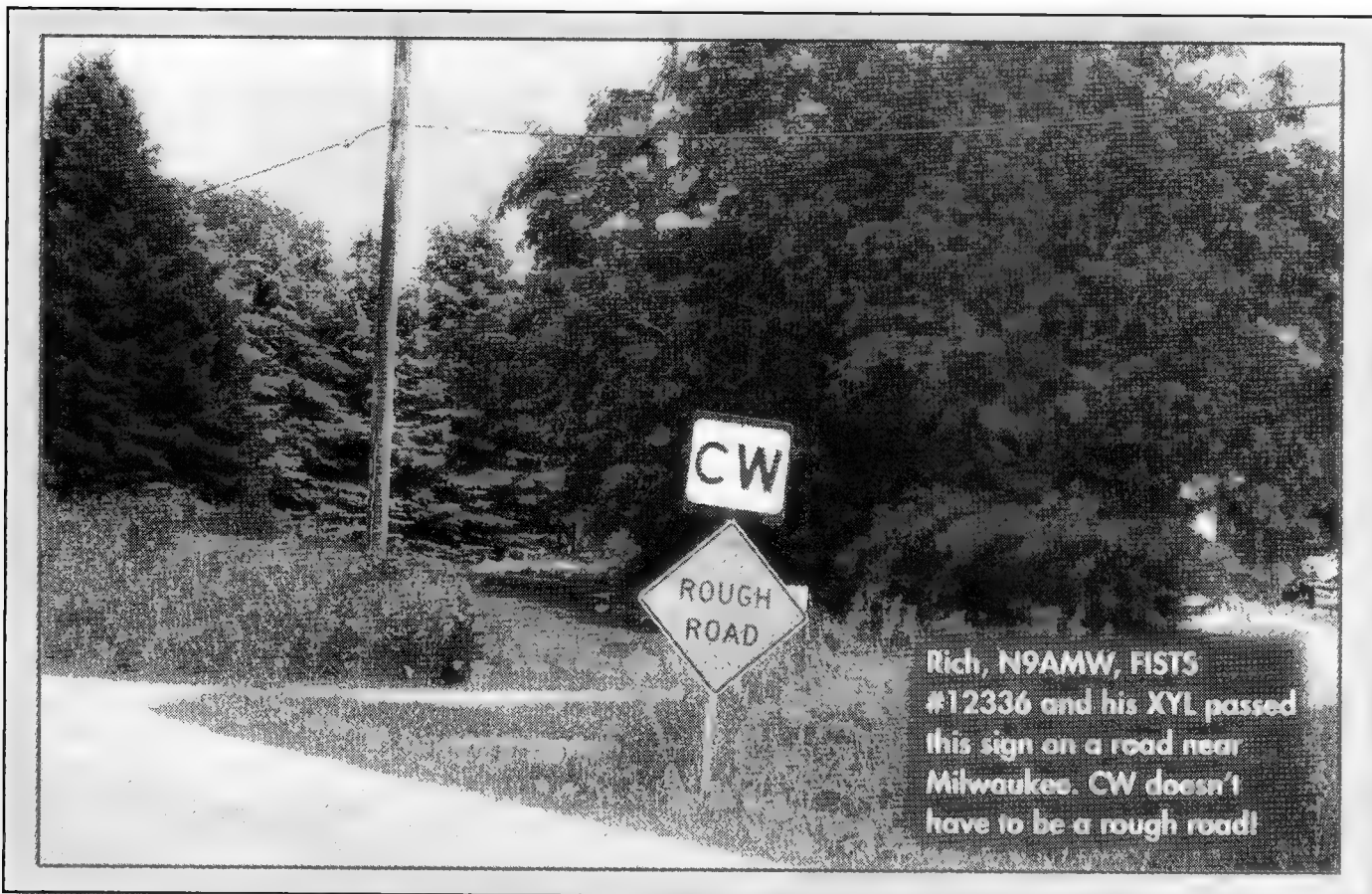
*"Nancy, the new Keynote has an inspiring article by John Shannon. He writes an interesting account of his experiences making a record of daily cw contacts. He uses the term QRO. Nowhere in this newslet-*

*ter can I find a definition of QRO. Without knowing what that means a lot of understanding is left out."*

I'll run a list of the abbreviations (like OM, YL...) in a future issue, but let's start with some basic Q-signs. Please try to learn these; not only will it make QSOs easier and faster, but it will help you lose your "Novice accent"....I know Novice licenses are no longer

issued, but that is another term that the new hams should know anyway.

When a Q-signal has a question mark after it, it is in the form of a question. When it doesn't have a question mark, it's a statement. These are a few of the more common ones heard on the ham bands. If you'd like to see a whole list, check out <http://www.ac6v.com> and do a search on the site for "Q-SIGNALS."



Rich, N9AMW, FISTS #12336 and his XYL passed this sign on a road near Milwaukee. CW doesn't have to be a rough road!



# Q-Signs

Meaning	
QRG	Will you tell me my exact frequency? Your exact frequency is ____ kHz
QRJ	Are you receiving me badly? I cannot receive you, your signal is too weak.
QRL	Are you busy? I am busy, please do not interfere
QRM	Is my transmission being interfered with? Your transmission is being interfered with ____ (1- Nil, 2-Slightly, 3-Moderately, 4-Severly, 5-Extremely.)
QRN	Are you troubled by static? I am troubled by static ____ (1-5 as under QRM.)
QRO	Shall I increase power? Increase power.
QRP	Shall I decrease power? Decrease power.
QRQ	Shall I send faster? Send faster (____ WPM.)
QRR	Are you ready for automatic operation? I am ready for automatic operation. Send at ____ WPM.
QRR	Are you ready for automatic operation? I am ready for automatic operation. Send at ____ WPM.
QRS	Shall I send more slowly? Send more slowly (____ WPM.)
QRT	Shall I stop sending? Stop sending.
QRU	Have you anything for me? I have nothing for you.
QRV	Are you ready? I am ready.
QRZ	Who is calling me? You are being called by ____.
QSB	Are my signals fading? Your signals are fading.
QSK	Can you hear me between you signals and if so can I break in on your transmission? I can hear you between my signals, break in on my transmission.
QSL	Can you acknowledge receipt? I am acknowledging receipt
QSY	Shall I change to another frequency? Change to another frequency.
QTH	What is your location? My location is ____.

# THE IMPORTANCE OF MORSE CODE

By Sean Dean, W8OKN

Technology has changed more in the last 150 years than in the previous 10,000 and I believe that CW has had a major, positive impact on this technological development.

CW is my bag, my hobby and one of my main passions. Almost every evening for the last 34 years, I have been in my radio shack calling CQ, (-.-. -.-) in Morse code. It's a never ending occurrence. People outside the ham radio community must think I'm mad, or worse. But I envision myself at the age of 85, down in my shack, calling CQ on 40 meters. If there is such a thing as perpetual motion, it would be defined as W8OKN, down in his shack, calling CQ in Morse code.

Yes, I have a real life and I work for a living. But if this were the year 1870, I can assure you that I'd be riding horseback to work, and watching the trains come in from my chair near the red and white station window, seated in front of my paddle, as I send a message to the next steam train station over and across the valley. I'd be trying to find Sam Morse (before passing away in April of 1872) to ask why Q and Y are so long, and I'd be telling my wife that when "wireless" is introduced in my town, I plan to be one of the first ones to use it. That



Sean Dean, W8OK

said, I guess it's fair that I may be a tad slanted in favor of CW. I think it was instrumental in saving the world from destruction (WW1 and 2) and for that, I'm not only grateful, but a believer that it is perhaps one of the greatest creations giving to man.

*"What God hath wrought?"*  
May, 1844

Morse code, or CW as we know it in its practical use, ranks above bar codes and GPS. I find it hard to think that bar codes saved us from ourselves. If GPS would have been in existence for the last 170 years, perhaps it could have

been the thing that kept the world at peace. But no, it was Morse code, first, that allowed communication to travel at the speed of light since the 1840s. First it happened through wires and wooden poles sticking up through the Arizona desert, through the Alps, and then later through the wireless across an ocean. CW launched the world into the future through its ability to easily send messages across thousands of miles and then by inspiring the world to think beyond the horse and buggy. Once we realized the possibilities, we invented and we communicated. Morse code is the greatest invention, with only radio as a possible contender, and certainly not texting or social networking.

And now we have the Internet. Yes, I give it credit. I'm amazed with it and I am fascinated with cell phones and texting, too. However, let's be honest. Cut the power and the Internet is gone. And cell phones drop with bad weather in a heart beat. We all know it. We also all know the race on The Tonight Show between the texters and the Morse code heroes and we know who won. 170 year old technology beat the texting, hands down! All of us know that it was Morse code that allowed ships to be saved

out at sea, and there are too many people saved by Morse code to count. Even the people on the Titanic could have been saved had they realized the power of CW. It wasn't CWs fault that early messages were ignored, but our lack of appreciation of its possibilities.

Let me see if I got this right. I can send Morse code with a flashlight. I can send Morse code by tapping the hospital rail, should I ever need to do so. I don't need a radio, or

a cell phone, or the Internet. With Morse code, I routinely communicate with 3B8CF in Mauritius using CW from my basement in northern Michigan through an 18 gauge wire. I'm not able to do so as easily with a microphone. By tapping my fingers efficiently, I can inform someone of the weather, an emergency, or identify band conditions in auto mode,

OK, I'll give a little. Morse code did not stop the Vietnam War,

nor did it save the world from the flu of the 1910s. But I assure you that Morse code was a huge part of both of these events, but was missed as to its significance because it was taken for granted in the same way we take the telephone for granted. When it's all said and done, if we're honest with ourselves, Morse code is as important to world history as are all of the above mentioned inventions in the last 170 years.



## READER FEEDBACK

First, my good news: I have 500 Fists but no wallpaper required — just satisfaction,

Very happy to see the picture of John Shannon on cover of The Keynote, now I know the face of the one responsible for my E-mail on the Web.

I was searching the web for a long time ago friend nothing. So for a try, I punch my name: Gery Robidoux. The big surprise, I'm there with my E-mail and the reply from John/K3WWP. No QSO yet. With NAQCC #3077 there is a chance in the future.

In the end of 1997 I started to follow a course for traffic handler with MSN Maryland Slow Net, part of NTS National Traffic System. Completed and became instructor March 26, 1998. August 8 of the same year, I became a FIST #5338 and realized that most of the 30 regular on MSN were FISTS also. That when I started to collect the members numbers of this great group FISTS.

This week because of the WX outside and my lack of occupation, decided to revise my QSL cards and sent cards to my regular

contacts from the MSN roster list. The best QSO date would be for the first contact "that makes sense" some goes back to 1994, 97, 98, 99 and 2000 more than 10 years ago. I can't wait for the replies. Expecting close to fifteen QSL cards.

This would probably sound better in French but across the border, it has to be English. My computer underlines in red for mistakes and in green for composition, grammar? Anyway that's my best.

Thank for your attention, 88 Gery.

Gérard Robidoux

VE2KRM

286 Barbotte RR 1

Lacolle, Qc. J0J 1J0

Also KD6FXW

POB 525

Rouses Pt., NY 12979-0525

*Good to hear from you, Gery, and congratulations on working 500 FISTS! That's quite an accomplishment!*

*— Nancy, WZ8C*



# THE NEW DXER'S HANDBOOK

## — CHAPTER ONE

by Bryce Anderson, K7UA

From time to time, as space permits, we will print chapters from *The New Dxe's Handbook* by Bryce Anderson, K7UA. Here is the first chapter.

**Forward: Every accomplished DXer was a beginner at one time. This booklet contains many of the basics of successful DXing. DXing can become a lifelong passion. It is also a lot of fun! DXing offers opportunities of personal growth in a wide variety of areas from geography, to science, to language skills. It also offers a competitive outlet for those who are so inclined.**

**I hope that this short handbook will give a running start to those new to our ranks.**

— *Best regards,*  
*Bryce Anderson, K7UA*

### CHAPTER – 1

*Listening – The key to successful DXing:*

The humble student approached the Zen Master, bowing and slowly gaining the courage to ask: “Master..... What is the secret of working DX?” The Master smiled and simply replied: “**Listen. Always listen,** Grasshopper.”

Listen? Why? Listen for what?

In the most literal sense an accomplished DXer is truly a hunter. Great hunters know what they are hunting, what it looks like, what it sounds like, and where it is likely to be found. They don't just tromp through the woods hoping that their prize will just stand in front of them saying “Hey, shoot me!” They know when and where to look to improve their odds and they keep a keen eye open to find the big game before someone else does.

**That is why we listen.** We are scouting the band for stations that just came on the air. The weak ones from far away that no one else has noticed yet. If you are the first to find a great DX station, you will probably get him. You will have no competition. Also, some openings to the most remote places on Earth are only a few minutes long. You have to be there at just the right time. Sometimes propagation can be very selective in who can contact who. You might just be the only one hearing that rare DX station.

Oh! I don't need to do that! I'll just wait for him to come up on the DX Cluster system.

OK. If you are “**THE T-REX**” of 20M this might work out fine. You have the power to destroy your competition and slam through any pile up. However, for the rest of us, once a rare DX station is spotted the competition skyrockets. And by not listening, you will miss out on those weak ones that no one else ever hears or bothers to spot. Using DX Clusters is a terrific tool, but it isn't the only means to becoming a successful DXer. We will discuss DX Clusters in a later chapter.

Now back to **listening — the key to successful DXing.** The concept of listening is very simple. Start on one end of the band and slowly tune up or down the band looking for DX. You should especially check out

the DX portion of that band. The DX portion is usually the lower end of each sub-band (phone & CW). While you are slowly tuning, stop on each station that you hear for a few seconds and figure out if they are DX, working DX, or of no interest to a DXer. Pick out call letters. They are the obvious way to determine if a station is DX or not. The subject that they are discussing can also be a clue. A rag chew discussing something mundane can be skipped over. A station ripping off QSOs as fast as they can go is something to be checked out further. Pay special attention to weak signals, phone operators speaking with accents or in a foreign language, and to signals that just sound "funny." By funny I mean having a "fluttery" sound, an echo, or a poor CW note. Signals that travel over the poles are impacted by the aurora that is always present. It gives both phone and CW signals the fluttery sound. It is called "arctic flutter." Once you have heard it, you will never forget it. Echoes come from signals arriving at your location from multiple paths. The difference in those path lengths creates the echo. Sometimes US stations sound this way from "backscatter," but some DX stations from very far away may be arriving via multiple paths and also have an echo. Poor CW notes may be caused by echoes or from technical issues at the DX station.

A poor power source or equipment that was not constructed to modern standards may tip you off to a DX station. Commercial power is very poor in many parts of the world and good equipment may be very hard to obtain. Of course when you tune upon a huge pileup you know that something of interest is on!

The best way to listen is by wearing headphones. Having a nice

ly from 50 to 20,000 hertz. Communications only uses a range from about 300 to 3,000 hertz. You don't want those super highs because in a communications situation they are just noise. The chest thumping bass response is also useless. You are better off with a headset designed for communications. Various manufacturers make them. Most of us use headsets made by Heil Sound

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“In the most literal sense  
an accomplished DXer is truly a  
hunter.”

---

speaker to use with rag chews, waiting for your turn on the net roster, or other casual operating is fine. For DXing you need headphones. Headphones allow you to reduce the noise around you and to use the minimum of AF gain (volume). You can concentrate better without distractions. **You will hear a weak signal better with headphones.** Trust me on that.

Not just any headphones will do. First they have to be comfortable so that you can wear them for extended periods. Another factor to consider is the frequency response of the headset. High fidelity headsets designed for music have a very wide frequency response. Typical-

<http://www.heilsound.com/> . They are the standard for ham radio and difficult to beat. Noise cancelling phones can be useful if you have something like an amplifier blower making a constant sound that can be blocked out. The final choice of a headset is very personal, just like picking out a pair of shoes.

As you gain experience in listening you will get greater and greater rewards. There is no doubt that an experienced DXer will pick out many more DX stations than a less experienced operator. You too can gain that skill through practice. After a while you will be able to "sniff out" DX that many others won't even notice.





# FISTS DOWN UNDER

## Newsletter – April 2011

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QSL Manager for ZL6FF: Nigel Hardy, ZL2TX at address above.  
QSL Manager for VK2FDU: Chris Thompson VK1CT at address above

Address e-mails for all persons above to:  
<fists-down-under@ihug.co.nz>  
Web site -: <www.fistsdownunder.org>



### SUGGESTED FISTS CLUB CALLING FREQUENCIES

1.808 MHz (160m) – 3.528 MHz (80m) – 7.028 MHz (40m) – 10.118 MHz (30m) –  
14.058 MHz (20m) – 18.085 MHz (17m) – 21.058 MHz (15m) – 24.918 MHz (12m) – 28.058 MHz (10m)

Members are reminded that the above frequencies are suggested calling frequencies. If they are busy, it is suggested that once you establish contact with a station, it may be prudent to change frequency down the band, avoiding other calling frequencies of known clubs.

### DOWN UNDER MEMBERS' NEWS

We appreciate the donations received from VK5BSC-Brian #9601, VK2PS-Steve #9022, ZL1PY-Rod #9622, ZL3REX-Rex #9640, ZL1AYQ-Jim #9602, VK1AI-Greg #9604 and VK2UK-Ted #9620

### ANOTHER DISASTER

Our last two issues have reported on the flood disasters in Australia and the earthquake in Christchurch. Unfortunately a further horrendous natural disaster has been experienced by our East Asia members in Japan. We have tried to contact a few of our fellow FISTS members there and have received the following replies:-

**JE1CLH-Mack #9012** - Thanks for inquiring, fortunately, no damage to my house or dental office. It was a really big one, the biggest I have ever had in my life. An Oil tank is on fire in neighboring city (Ichihara). I can not imagine about the awful damage in JA7.

**JO3HPM-Nao #15008** - Thank you. Here, west side of Japan is OK. But it's a very confusing situation in Japan. There is no information about JA7 area member, especially Sugi JK7UST, so far.

**JL3SIK-Jean #9836** - Thank you for your kind concern. The earthquake and tsunami hit mainly JA7 and some part of JA1 and JA0 area. Almost of all FEA members are safe, but some members are silent. JK7UST Sugi who lives in Natori which is very close to Sendai may be severely hit. But I heard he was safe yesterday. JR7OEF Nori who lives in Sendai is now silent. No reply from him.



Damage in Natori

P.S. JK7UST Sugi tweeted that he and his family all were safe.

### HOUSEKEEPING

Unless we notify you otherwise, FISTS Down Under should reach no later than fifth of the month of issue – the only exception being January. So if you haven't received your newsletter by then, please let us know immediately, so that we can rectify the matter. Likely reasons are when we aren't informed changes of email or postal addresses and when the fault lies at our end. WE have been proved recently not to be infallible!



### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

These are some of the contest/event offerings in April 2011 most of which will be of more interest to our NA and EU readers – Thanks to WA7BNM Contest Calendar <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/contestcal.html>

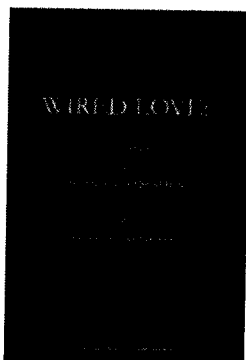
JIDX CW Contest, 0700Z, Apr 9 to 1300Z, Apr 10  
EU Spring Sprint CW, 1600Z-1959Z, Apr 9  
SKCC Weekend Sprint, 0000Z-2400Z, Apr 10  
Hungarian Straight Key Contest, 1500Z-1700Z, Apr 10  
NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint, 0030Z-0230Z, Apr 13  
CWops Mini-CWT Test, 1100Z-1200Z, Apr 13 and 1900Z-2000Z, Apr 13 and 0300Z-0400Z, Apr 14  
Holy land DX Contest, 0000Z-2359Z, Apr 16  
Run for the Bacon QRP Contest, 0100Z-0300Z, Apr 18  
SKCC Sprint, 0000Z-0200Z, Apr 27

### "WIRED LOVE"

Review by David Dunn VK3DBD

The atmosphere of an era past is preserved in writings. Samuel Pepys went down in history because he wrote of mundane details of daily life. His famous diaries were particularly unique when one remembers that only a very small percentage of folk could even write in the 1600's. We tend to forget how our very way of life has changed greatly over the last 100 years or so. Inventions are a necessity of wars and with two world wars in that period as well as numerous others which are officially described as a "skirmish" our progress in technology has been accelerated in only two or three generations.

Even electricity was little used and even less understood in the late 19th century the period this book was written by one Ella Cheever Thayer, presumably in USA and it was first published in 1879 by a London Publisher.



In the interests of preserving a few details of the Telegraph system (the Victorian Internet as it has been called in more recent years) The Robert Haytow Memorial Radio Club, the publisher of the well known K9YA Telegraph newsletter. The Club rightfully made a decision to reprint the story of a couple of telegraph operators. Fiction one presumes and the title "Wired love" is self explanatory, it is a boy meets girl story which is certainly quite feasible. It is even possible the author may have been in the business, or perhaps someone in her family was, she has most of the technical details correct, even if put into simple terms for the readers of that period to understand.

In these modern times, we are urged to save time, speed up, to abbreviate. In Victorian days it seems that was not the way of normal mortals and the somewhat flowery speech and correct use of English was expected and expedited by those fortunate to have had an education.

Reading this book is good therapy for relaxation as soon as one adjusts to that fact that the Victorian pace of life was slow. Reading the first few pages, the emerging scene seems slow, then one mentally slows to the Victorian pace of life and although the plot very soon seems apparent, there is a slight twist in the story - which of course as one expects, culminates in a happy ending after a degree of mystery mixed with a good picture of the daily life including the limited entertainments and indeed restricted activities young folk would have had in those days.

For the Morse code lover one can picture the scenes of the distant operators listening to their sounders. and sending messages with a real brass pounding key. The American Morse in use at that time seems to me to be a hard one to learn, especially with respect to the two lengths of dashes: spacing must have been very critical indeed, but like the double click of the sounder, it was the way they learnt the code of those times.

The dedication page in the front of the book bears a short passage printed in American Morse, which appears to have one error, a C has been substituted for an R and there appears to be a grammatical error too. The final page of the book also has a short dot/dash ending. A translation of American Morse for those that are not familiar with it is not offered!

A good read for the even slightly romantically minded and stimulation for those who support the preservation of the code, which in spite of the major input by his very practical colleague and employee Alfred Vail, made Samuel Morse, the artist and showman, famous.

The book is worthy of a place on the enthusiasts bookshelf. *This is the K9YA Telegraph notice on the availability of the novel.*

### "Wired Love" –the book

K9YA is pleased to offer "Wired Love – A Romance of Dots and Dashes" to our readers. This 19<sup>th</sup> Century telegraphic romance demonstrates Internet dating is not so new after all.

The book was painstakingly recreated by K9YA Telegraph volunteers and is offered to our readers from Lulu.com at: <http://www.lulu.com/product/paperback/wired-love-a-romance-of-dots-and-dashes/14252429>

### **FISTS DOWN UNDER NEWSLETTER** **Remember this is your newsletter!**

Your articles, stories, photographs and items of interest are always needed by your Editor. Once again there will be a prize for the best article received during the coming year ending MAY 2011.

For the Runner Up, there will also be a Special Award of a FREE Subscription for one year to FISTS Down Under. Articles and Photographs may be submitted by either e-mail or post. Those submitted by post will be returned to the sender once dealt with. Our addresses are in the newsletter header – please use them! Please think about it! - Start writing now!

### **TRAWLING THE WEB**

Using an iambic paddle - [http://www.hamradioinstructor.com/download/K7QO\\_iambic\\_Paddle.pdf](http://www.hamradioinstructor.com/download/K7QO_iambic_Paddle.pdf)

White River Valley Museum, History of Morse code - <http://www.wrvmuseum.org/morsecode/morsecodehistory.htm>

Courage Center Handiham System – Ham radio and technology for people with disabilities - <http://handiham.org/>

Yet another keyer - <http://www.crosscountrywireless.net/kever.htm>

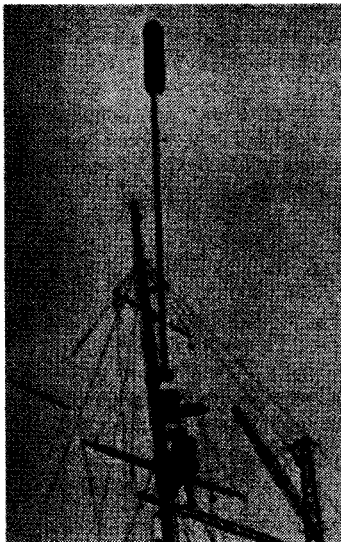
### **CRAZY WARTIME DEVICES – 1**

By ZL2AOH-Ralph #1073

There's a lot of salt water coursing in the veins of many Morse operators, through their service as marine radio officers. There may be others like me who served as deck officers. So I thought that I could veer off course a little and write about some of the crack-brained things in World War 2 that were supposed to protect us from the enemy.

Soon after the war commenced, on our first trip back to the UK we went to RN Dockyard, Plymouth to be fitted with armament.

The principal weapon fitted was an anti-submarine 4.7 inch gun that had been manufactured in Yokosuka, Japan in 1918. Also we received a 12 pounder gun that was for anti aircraft protection. (A retired Royal Marine was attached to the ship to train us in the use of the weapons and for their maintenance. Thank goodness we never had to use them in anger! I have a permanent reminder of those guns with severe hearing loss, (something the Her Majesty's government eventually recognized as a war disability).



In addition to the guns we were fitted with what was called an AWD (Acoustic Warning Device). This was intended to detect the sound of approaching aircraft long before they could be sighted or heard without assistance.

The external element was a collection of sensitive microphones enclosed in what looked like a giant bulrush fitted to the highest mast. The internal element was a receiver and amplifier in a large steel enclosure about the size of a small wardrobe. Inside was a collection of radio valves that glowed nicely. Attached to this structure were a large electric bell and a bulkhead lamp containing a red light globe.

The principle was that on detecting the sound of an aircraft, the bell would ring loudly and the red light would flash, so that the crew had time to rush to man the 12 pounder anti aircraft gun.

I don't know what success the AWDs had in detecting enemy aircraft. Ours certainly didn't. They were however excellent at detecting the squawks of seagulls, especially if one took residence on the top of the bulrush. They were also good at detecting the sound of whistling buoys of which there were plenty in British waters.

It doesn't take much imagination to realize what an annoying distraction was this clanging and flashing. Consequently we soon switched the thing off and after our unfavourable reports; it was removed from the ship.

I have recently learned that Neville Shute, the famous novelist had a hand in developing the AWD that was manufactured by The Gramophone Company (HMV). Shute was a qualified aeronautical engineer whose history is interesting in itself.

As I hinted in the title, there were other interesting gadgets forthcoming for our protection. I will write about some of these in future issues of FISTS Down Under.

## PROFILE

### ZL1CDX Turner (Geordie) Fielding



Born 1941 - North Shields, England. Started to serve an apprenticeship, as an engineer. Volunteered and joined the Parachute Regiment for two years. Founder member, of the Northumbria Parachute Club, and the Blue Stars Sky Diving Team.

Emigrated to New Zealand in 1980. Married for 43 years to my wife Betty, with 3 children and 4 grandchildren.

Sat the Amateur Examination in 1989 and got the call ZL1UMQ. (V.H.F. and above). Six months later passed the Morse Examination and received my full call sign  $\pm$ ZL1CDX. Promptly buried the Morse Key in the backyard (Hated it!).

Two years later I was put on the spot with a ham requiring a contact for an award on 80 meters CW!

I bought a Keyer Unit and a Iambic Paddle and for 6 months it was nose to the grindstone. Now 95% operating is using CW and loving it!

I have worked and met some very interesting and amazing people from all walks of life whilst operating on the DX Bands.

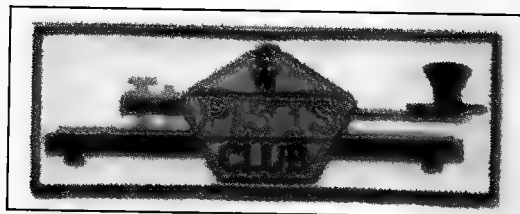
My interests are DX, FISTS CW Club, Building Antennas and Contesting.

I would like to thank Len, ZL1BLR and Dave, ZL1AV (S.K.) who encouraged me in my early days and also a big thank you to the thousands of hams who I have worked over the years.

My other interests are playing the electronic organ and fly fishing for trout.

Keep those antennas beaming to ZL.

Turner (Geordie), ZL1CDX





Recommended calling QRGs: 7.026/7.028, 10.118/10.138, 14.058, 18.085, 21.058/21.138, 24.918, 28.058/28.158

FEA Net: 7.026 MHz 2300UTC on Saturdays, 14.054 MHz 0800UTC on Sundays

Newsletter Editor, FEA Net Manager: Nao JO3HPM (jo3hpm@fists-ea.org)

Membership Secretary: Jean JL3SIK (join-fea@fists-ea.org)

Web administrator, QSL Manager, Newsletter E-mail Distributor: Harry JL3AMK (webadmin@fists-ea.org)

FISTS members can receive the morsEAsia via e-mail. Please email webadmin with your FISTS#.

Other members of administration: Sugi JK7UST & Manabu JE1RZR

<http://www.feacw.net/> or <http://www.fists-ea.org/> (Secondary)

## All JA MEMBERS ARE SAFE

North-eastern Japan (Tohoku, JA7) struck by a massive 9.0-magnitude earthquake with huge 15-meter tsunami on 11th March. All JA members and their families are safe. But many disaster victims lost their family or friends. As of Apr. 2, the death toll rise to 11,828 and 15,540 people are still unknown. We express deep sorrow.

## NEW MEMBERS

15089 Yasu JG3TSX

15090 Toshi JF1RDC (also JO7WXN)

## CHRIS HS0ZFE

With deep empathy and true sadness am I hearing of the disaster in Japan! When all fails, a QRP home-brew transceiver will get through with CW. Mobile phone networks, telephone and the internet fail. there is no electricity. But CW still works over long distances.

All the best, be strong!



## "THE 3.11" BY LEO JJ8KGZ

On March 11th, after a lunch break, I was sitting at a desk in my office and translating an operation manual of an agricultural machine made in Germany. A regular drowsiness in the afternoon came and I was about to stand up to go to a vending machine located at the corner of the

office and grab a can of iced-coffee from a vending machine.

"You got a phone call from Singapore on line one," said our receptionist. I soon recognized it was Keng Wah, the marketing manager of Asia and Pacific region of JCB. We were now placing an order of a Fastrac, a big tractor which is capable of running on the public highway with 80 km/h and have been discussing with Keng what kind of essential and optional features on the tractor will suite for the customer since that morning.

While we were talking on the phone, Fumi, one of my co-worker and a daughter of my company's president, shouted "An earthquake !?". I didn't feel anything at that moment but in a few seconds, I felt the floor of the office start rolling. Initially, it provided an illusion that I was having dizziness but I soon realized some drawings and photo frames were swinging on the wall.

"Keng, we are having an earthquake here", I said.

"Oh, that's too bad. Are you guys alri.....", he replied but the line broke up.

Kazuo, the president stood up and said " Isn't it very big?" and I replied, "No, it isn't". We all thought it would stop soon, but the rolling was gradually getting bigger and bigger. Having experienced being hit by countless of small and medium earthquakes, we Japanese can immediately weigh the differences between "Big" and "Small" by feeling what type of shock we are having. The rolling didn't stop and got much bigger. "No. It's big!" I said to the president as I supported a bookshelf behind my desk.

Everybody in the office stood up and one of them said " Look at those trees out side!". Street-side trees were swaying and I could see some people getting out of the opposite building. "It's really big, isn't it", said Kazuo and "Yeah, and it's long". I replied. We felt the shock last for over two minutes.

I became to be worried about my co-leagues who were working in our stock facility and went into the building, which is connected to my office room by a door. There are tons of machine parts and huge tires accumulated on the shelves and I thought they might have crumbled and my buddies may be buried under those stuff. I shouted "Are you guys OK?"

Fortunately, Mamoru, the parts manager and another staff have already got out of the building and they were waiting for us outside.



Mamoru was smoking and said, "You should immediately get out of the building when an earthquake like this hits!". "Yeah, you're right." I replied to his smiling face. Workers of the other offices have also got out of their buildings with a troubled look.

Anyway, the earthquake has gone.

Getting back to the office desk, I was about to resume my task, translating.

Suddenly, Fumi, next to my desk said, "It was near Sendai and its magnitude was 7.9!". Kazuo and I took a look at her computer screen. It was a website of Met Office Japan.

"Gosh! It's massive", Kazuo said.

I was worried about Sugi, JK7UST lives in the city of Natori just south of Sendai and thought there might have been a lot of casualties.

There was no TV sets and radios in our office so we couldn't figure out the situation in the area located about 500Kms south of our island. But Fumi kept gleaning information on the Internet accessing Twitter, Facebook and other news sources.

It seemed to be worsening every moment and we held our breath for fear when Fumi showed us a photo, which was uploaded on Twitter.

We weren't sure where it was taken but there were a lot of vehicles engulfed by Tsunami. "No, way! It must be a Computer Graphic." Kazuo said. I stopped my work and concentrated on seeking news on the Internet.

As I surfed websites of Kyodo News Service, NHK Breaking News, Japan Met Office and Yomiuri Breaking News etc., I become to feel rather strongly that the photo was a real one and it was actually a massive disaster.

"I wonder if Takumi is al-right", Kazuo mentioned about his first son resides in Tokyo and tried to call him several times. But at that time, we recognized most of the mobile phones in main Island were not reachable and even some fixed phones in town were inaccessible.

After the several trials, I could reach my son Taiga at home.

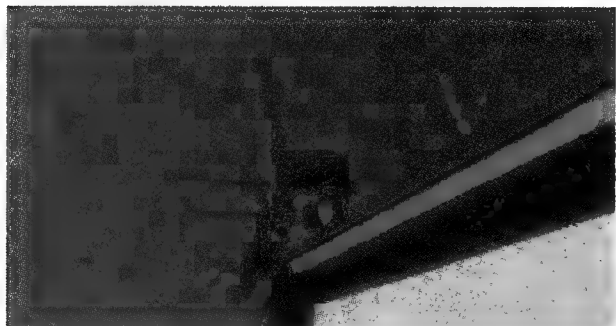
"There is no damage and trouble at home and I switched off the oil heating", said Taiga. "Good. But be aware of aftershocks and get out of the house when big one comes", I advised him and he said "OK, dad".

I was relieved a little.

<To be continued.>

## JUN JQ1BWT

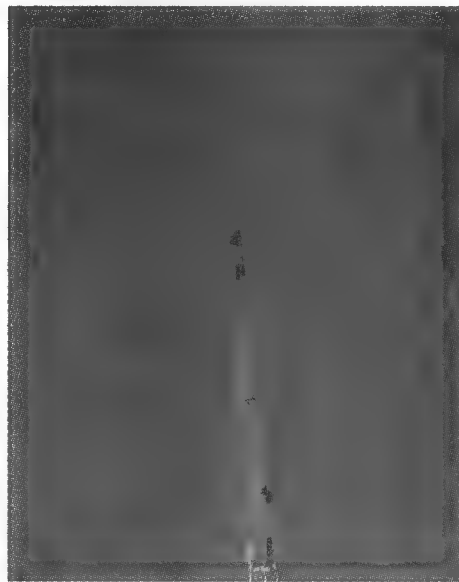
TV broadcasting are changing from analogue system to digital system in Japan. Analogue broadcasting will be stopped 4 month later. I constructed a new antenna to receive digital TV broadcasting on a roof of my house.



Please don't mistake. I am not a professional electrical worker

## KAZU JK1TCV

In last November, I newly build a 21-meter-high crank-up tower with a HF multi-band Yagi antenna. The antenna works as a 4 elements Yagi for each band. The performance of the new antenna is greater than a 2 elements HB9CV which I used before. Mostly I operated QRP, but I could make contact with new entities. Since a propagation condition is becoming better, I'm looking forward to meeting many stations using the new antenna.



## "ONE YEAR TILL RETIREMENT" BY TAKESHI JA4IJJ

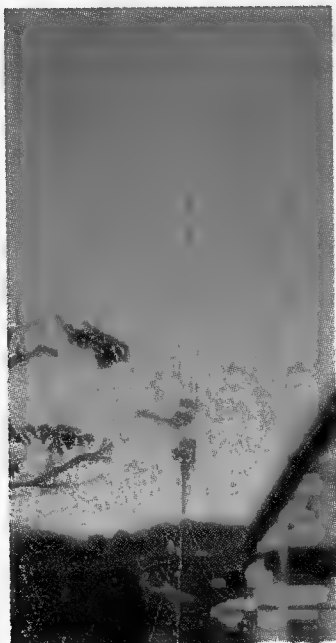
How do you do, FISTS EA members? This is JA4IJJ, Takeshi, a new comer living in the north part of Hiroshima city. I was asked by Nao-san, JO3HPM, to write a short story for the News letter. Due to such a bad condition that I have never experienced after starting again amateur radio after about 30 years, sorry to say, I have not been very active on the air in these days. Where has the cycle 24 gone? Besides this condition, one of the reasons of my low activity is my poor antenna system as in the photo below. BTW, my rig IC-7600M is very nice in comparison with my old one TS-930.

Another excuse of my low activity is that I am still under pressure from my work: Going to the office, working, driving back to my home, eating a dinner with one or two glasses of wine, watching 9 p.m. news, bathing and sleeping, that's all for every weekday except for occasional business trips!

I am already 63 years of age. Only a few years ago it was thought that the compulsory retirement age was my present age. However, situation changed due to the pension issue of our organization and I have to work one more year (!), that just postponed my preparation for having such a comfortable life with enjoying amateur radio in the fine condition and listening to music in the bad one. From what I have heard, the amount of work will be considerably reduced but no one knows the truth, since this is the first case. Hopefully, my amateur radio activity

will increase from April, together with the sunspot number.

When the condx is so so, my activity is concentrated on some hours in the Sunday afternoon (3.5 MHz and 7 MHz). Most recent QSO with a FISTS EA member was with JQ2SFZ on 8th Jan on 7 MHz (thanks, Isao-san!). Frankly, I love chatting like Shin-san (JA1NUT) and Atsu-san (JE1TRV, long time no see for both stations) do, but I occasionally joined some contests (e.g. ARRL CW test on the 20th of Feb, WAS CW test on the 27th) only to check the condition of the ionosphere and my antennas. You can see two commercial GPs in the photo, the left one is only for 3.5 MHz (originally it was the five banders from 3.5 MHz to 28 MHz, but the other bands were detuned). The right one is for 7 MHz and 21 MHz (originally four banders from 7 MHz to 28 MHz), with full size radials for 7 MHz. When condx is not enough for my system, I am making an amp with ceramic tubes for fun using junks still stocked in my mother's home. I really love vacuum tubes: it's a pity that I have discarded many MT and GT tubes, but still have bigger tubes like 3-, 4-, 4CX tubes etc (and still collecting!).



My dream is to build up a big tower with full size Yagi for HF, but no chance for that due to a limited space of my site as you can see. My wife loves Japanese style gardening. While I have been away from amateur radio activity for ages, she fixed up her garden and I need negotiation to set the GPs, hi.

If you, members hear my weak signals, please call me up at any time. I will respond you for sure, if I can read you. That's all for today. I enjoyed writing after many years. Last but not least, thank you, Nao-san for inviting me. Very best 73!

P.S. I would like to express my sincere condolences and deep mourning for those lost life in the biggest earthquake and subsequent tsunami on 11th March that we have never experienced for centuries. I am in deep sorrow over the tragedy of the towns in Tohoku and Kanto district. I have written the above note before the disaster, allow me if the content is unsuitable on this sad occasion.

## “A SMALL TRANCEIVER HAS TAKEN A YEAR TO BE BUILT UP” BY MAN JG0SXC

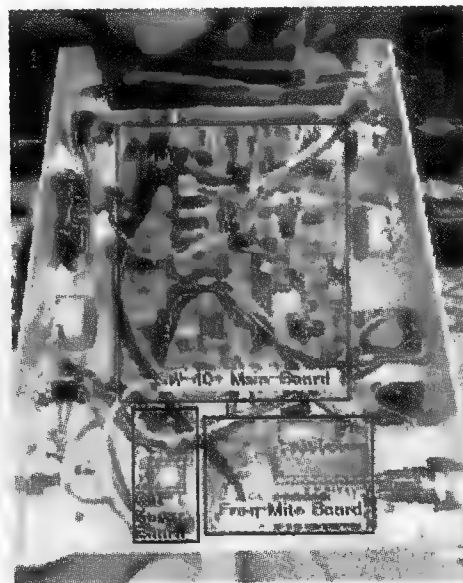
It was Xmas season in 2009 that I had planned to build it up. Then I had ordered a kit of SW-40+, a small CW transceiver for 40m band, to Small Wonder Labs in U.S.A. soon after that. But I finally got it very late around the last day of my New Year's Holidays because of the stock shortage. I was so disappointed that I had to gave up building it up for a long time. And a year had passed since then and I started to assemble the kit late in December 2010. It was so lucky that I finished it at last on January 1 in 2011.

I embedded it with a “Freq-Mite” and a “Cal-keyer” within the aluminum case. “Freq-mite” is a frequency counter which tells you the VFO frequency by three-digit Morse code, like “026” for 7.026 MHz. This is a small circuit board kit which can be built into almost any transceiver. It's very useful if your transceiver doesn't have a digital VFO display. “Cal-keyer” is a one chip electronic keyer kit provided by Calibration. The main board of SW-40+ is very small sized of 7 cm x 10 cm including about a hundred of parts to be soldered. Don't you think it is much easier to make than an Elecraft K1?

Though while adjusting the kit after assembling, I couldn't get the hoped-for VFO frequency at first, I could finally succeed in getting the range from 7.000 to 7.035 KHz by adding a couple of turns to one of the toroidal coils. Eventually I set the power output at 1.5 watts for 12V battery.

Its four pole XTAL filter nicely cuts QRM and very easy to hear the band. It seems like 400 Hz filter. But it shouldn't be right for contests or DX pile-ups, of course. So I like it very much especially for chatting with CW enthusiasts like you guys, hi.

I willingly admit that I love QRP transceivers. My ham life started in 1993 with a Mizuho MX-21, a handy transceiver of 21 MHz SSB/CW, output 2 watts. So I know its small power is useful enough to make contacts with ham radio stations all over Japan and even overseas. I have made various QRP transceiver kits so far such as OHR-100A, DSW-80, Rock-mite, K1 and K2. The reason that I chose SW-40+ this time is that it is so low- priced as



\$32!, that it is such a board kit that you can add some options or circuits if you want, and that it deals with useful 40 m band. On top of that, this is such a palm-size rig that you can take it out to anywhere you go.

I someday hope to put it into my pocket of my backpack with a small antenna and a battery then hike to mountains and have chatting with you guys. I look forward to seeing you. 73s from Nagano

### "BEGINNER'S DIARY" BY SAM 7N2XUZ

I indeed began CW QSO on September 2010. I have a poor rig and antenna. When I turn on rig, I often discover something new about CW QSO. Of course I'm a slow operator, I can understand little, listening others' high speed QSO. But I have great pleasure, when I suddenly understand them on the way. I use whip antenna HA750BL, John VK4TJ says "pirate antenna." I could do QSO as far as Korea. I hope to contact China, Singapore, Australia and other countries in future. It's my dream. Recently I found "a beginner will be able to enjoy CW QSO as a beginner." This photo is my ANT, set on the 5th floor balcony of the condominium.



### "THIS IS NOT MY SHACK" BY SAT JK1JHB

When I started CW in my late-teens, I trained myself to be a left-handed operator as I was told by one of my ham radio friends who eventually became professional in the field. Since then, I had been on and off for some time; I became completely off the air about 15 years ago.

Less than two years ago I made a comeback to the world of ham radio, and I decided to go CW only this time. After 15 years of long QRT, my brains were unable to process the code and my thumb and fingers completely forgot how to send it accurately and stably. I realized that I needed to restart CW from scratch, this time working much harder than in my teenage days so that I can hopefully become an OK CW operator again.

There is a big problem, though. It is that I now have very little time for CW practice. Now I work full-time; oftentimes I even have to work on weekends. As for copying practice, I could do it by listening to Morse code files with iPod on my way to work (and on the way back). However, I have more difficulty making time for sending practice, because the time I spend in the shack is very limited. When I am busy, for instance, I can't even touch my paddle, let alone turn on my rig, for several days....



To cope with this problem, currently I am trying a couple of things. First one is very simple: Use my left hand whenever possible, for instance, moving a computer mouse, operating cell phone, pressing floor buttons in elevator, touch-keying at ATM machine, etc. I was born right-handed and I gathered that part of the problem is that my left hand had been "idle" for a long time. By using my left hand as much as I can, I am hoping to regain some delicate feel or touch on my left thumb and fingers needed to manipulate the paddle stably.

The other thing I did is to install a small setup at my office, hoping to make up for the lack of sending practice in my shack. What you see in the picture is not my shack but my work desk. With an old G4ZPY paddle and a GHD Morse Training Unit, it becomes a very convenient CW training lab. Now I can practice sending the code whenever I have time in my office!

While I don't think these would substitute real-life QSOs and on-the-air code practice, I am hoping they would help me somehow regain my proficiency in CW communication. And I sincerely look forward to seeing you all FISTS members on the air. And please do not be so hard on this middle-aged comeback kid: )

### KEN JG0MWU

I am Ken JG0MWU living in Nagano city where the 1998 winter Olympics game held. I have been enjoying a telemark skiing since 5 years ago. This season, my telemark skiing skill made steady progress. I can ski in the deep new-fallen snow using it like using a snow board which I was crazy before. When I was taken an attached photograph, I skied as if I was swimming! I always have a



hand-held transceiver to the snow field. Lately I bought a Standard VX-3, 144/430 MHz FM hand-held transceiver, and I made 18 years old C401 retire. The VX-3 have a function to learn Morse code. I will learn the code again using the function and comeback on the air after melting snow on mountains.

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### "ADDICTED TO FOREIGN OPERATIONS" MASUMI JA3AVO

4S7AVG	September 2003, September 2004, January 2006
8Q7NM	January 2006
XU7AVO	November 2008, July 2010
VP5/W3AVO	January 2008
KP2/W3AVO	January 2009
9M6/JA3AVO	January 2010
VK9XO	January 2011

My operational history

In recent years, I sometime went to foreign countries to operate ham radio. And soon after returning JA, I think "Where next?" This is really fun!

Easy operation using rental-shack is called DX-vacation. It was mostly our style. In January of this year, we went to VK9X (Christmas island, Territory of Australia). This time we must bring all rigs and antennas. We really struggled with bad weather. Antenna construction was hard. Strong wind blew off the antenna we just built. And returning flight was delayed one day. We had to consider a worst-case scenario that we could not return for an additional week. This was not a real DX-pedition that go to a deserted island. But we tasted a bit of it.

Next I will go to T8 (Palau) in July with my daughter and her family live in Seattle. They will return JA during summer holiday, and we will go together. The operators

will be Masumi JA3AVO, my wife JH3PBL, and my grandson Syota W7AED.

Where next next? Current target is CE0Y (Easter island) in January 2012. Meeting Moai is I and my wife's dream. Nothing definite has been decided about the plan yet. But I want to go.



### RICK JJ0MPI

Hello. In colder JA0 areas, I play with a snowboard in winter. But I have already begun preparations for QRV in spring. I won a prize at some CW contests last year. The highest result was a JA0 area 1st prize on 50 MHz band. I could not forget that contest, because it was my first QRV on 50 MHz band! This year, I am planning portable CW operations again. The photograph shows my portable style at neighbouring mountain. It is 5 years since I got my call-sign JJ0MPI. Still most of my QSOs are rubber-stamp and 599BK. But I am looking forward to meeting you on the bands.



### YAMA 7K1CPT

Hello dear friends. I like CW mode and QRP. Most of all QSO using 5 Watts output.

I'm living in an apartment house. I have only poor wire antenna at my home. So I often go to field and build antenna. Dipole antenna is good for QSO and easy build. Sometime I use loop antenna and others. Now I want to make YAGI beam antenna and use for DX QSO.

I have 3 station license. All stations call sign is same 7K1CPT. Japanese license need equipments. A station power 50 W or less can operate all place portable. Most of all operate is this station. Over 51 W must use fix station. I have 100 Watts station at my living home. And I got 1KW station at KASUMIGAURA-CITY Last winter. It is my friend shack He approves me to get 1KW License. This shack have 4-tower and YAGI-beam antenna for 3.5



MHz to 430 MHz. I have chance to operate 2 or 3 times per year. Maybe next time will May by 8J1ITU and JUNE by 8J1VLP special station call sign. I hope to QSO many friends.



### YASU JG3TSX

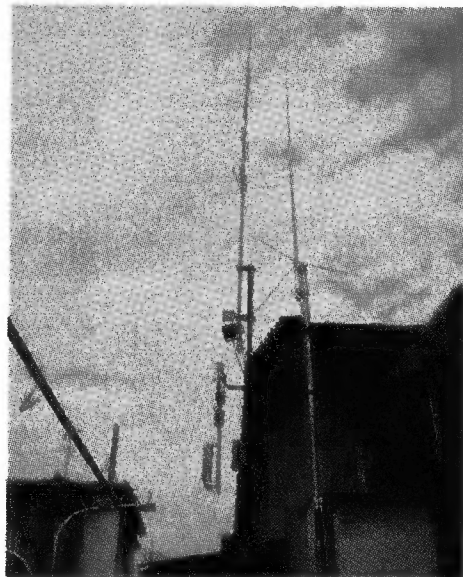
Hello all, I am Yasu JG3TSX FISTS#15089. I have been a ham at Kobe city since 30 years ago. At that time, I used a 21-MHz 3-element HB9CV and other 7 antennas on a roof tower of my house. It was a peak of solar cycle 21 and I could enjoy many QSO with both DX and domestic stations. In 1995, my house was completely destroyed by the Great Hanshin earthquake with a magnitude of 7.3. After, I moved to a condominium. I mainly use a HF multi band whip antenna Outbacker now. I think it is the greatest in the many whip antennas including JA products. My operation style has been QRP since last autumn. Every QSO by small antenna and low power make me happy. My dream is CW chat with DX. I am looking forward to meeting with you.



### MASAG JA4MRL

I have used Cushcraft R7 antenna since 20 years ago. The antenna is a half-wave vertical and covers 7 HF bands from 40 m to 10 m. Several years ago, I found VSWRs of some bands became high due to aging degradation. I added a manual tuner to improve VSWRs. Fortunately, it brought me a chance to operate on 6 m in addition to the original 7 bands. Two years ago, the propagation condition was very poor. Especially, I had much frustration during winter night. So, I added junk

coils from a broken Butternut vertical and radial wires to the R7 to operate on 160 m and 80 m. That work as a GP with elevated radials. Because the elevated radials make a radiation angle low, I can enjoy low-band QSOs despite the small size of the antenna. I built a GP for 2 m lately. Therefore, the bands I can operate are from 160 m to 2 m now. But I feel the most important thing to enjoy QSO is not having multi bands system, but finding QSO partners on the bands. Let's be on the air actively!



### “UNFOGETTABLE QSO” BY NORI JR7OEF

5A1A, 2001 June 22 1945UTC 17m CW.

I used a ICOM IC-706 and a balcony antenna of 20, 15, and 10 m bands at that time. On that morning, I listened 17 m band without any purpose and found a CQ. When I copied his call sign, my heart started beating. He was the only Libya amateur station, 5A1A. I tuned the antenna using an automatic tuner ICOM AT-130 and called him soon. Very luckily, still nobody found him and I could make a QSO with a 449 my report. It was difficult to receive his QSL card. I sent him a registered letter and received the card half a year later. Now Libya is hard situation. I pray for 5A1A operator's safety.



# **“FEA CW NET RESULTS: NO. 315 TO 327” BY NAO JO3HPM**

No.	Date(Y/M/D)	Time(UTC)	Freq.(MHz)	Controller	Participants
327-2	2011/3/27	none	none	none	none
327-1	2011/3/26	2300-2330	7.0233	JG0SXC(Man)	none
326-2	2011/3/20	0800-0842	14.0545	JO3HPM(Nao)	VK4TJ(John)
326-1	2011/3/19	2300-2343	7.022	JL3YMV/3(Nao)	JG0SXC(Man)
325-2	2011/3/13	0800-0825	14.054	JO3HPM(Nao)	ZL2AOH(Ralph)
325-1	2011/3/12	2300-2340	7.0245	JL3YMV/3(Nao)	JP1BJB(Aki), JG0SXC(Man), JN1WFF(Nao)
324-2	2011/3/6	0800-0850	14.054	JE1RZR(Manabu)	JO3HPM(Nao), JE1TRV(Atsu), VK4TJ(John)
324-1	2011/3/5	2300-0002	7.026	JL3YMV/3(Nao)	7N2XUZ(Sam), JP1BJB(Aki), JG0SXC(Man)
323-2	2011/2/27	0800-0848	14.054	JE7YTQ(Sugi)	JE1TRV(Atsu), JO3HPM(Nao), VK4TJ(John)
323-1	2011/2/26	2300-0005	7.026	JL3YMV/3(Nao)	JP1BJB(Aki), JJ8KGZ(Leo), JE1TRV(Atsu), JG0SXC(Man), JK7UST(Sugi)
322-2	2011/2/20	0800-0900	14.054	JE1RZR(Manabu)	JO3HPM(Nao), JK7UST(Sugi), 9V1VV(John), VK4TJ(John)
322-1	2011/2/19	2300-0000	7.0257	JL3YMV/3(Nao)	JP1BJB(Aki), JK7UST(Sugi), JA4MRL(MasaG), JG0SXC/0(Man)
321-2	2011/2/13	0800-0900	14.054	JO3HPM(Nao)	VK4TJ(John), JE1RZR(Manabu), JK7UST(Sugi)
321-1	2011/2/12	2300-0005	7.026	JL3YMV/3(Nao)	JE1TRV(Atsu), JP1BJB(Aki), JK1JHB(Sat), JG0SXC(Man), JA4MRL(MasaG)
320-2	2011/2/6	0800-0900	14.054	JE1RZR(Manabu)	9V1VV(John), VK4TJ(John), JK7UST(Sugi), OK1MGW, 9M2LMF, JL1IRB(Hoz), JO3HPM(Nao), RV9CFS
320-1	2011/2/5	2300-0005	7.0255	JL3YMV/3(Nao)	JP1BJB(Aki), 7N2XUZ(Sam), JG0SXC(Man)
319-2	2011/1/30	0800-0827	14.054	JE7YTQ(Sugi)	JE1RZR(Manabu)
319-1	2011/1/29	2300-0005	7.0247	JL3YMV/3(Nao)	JP1BJB(Aki), JK7UST(Sugi), JJ1TTG/7(Aki)
318-2	2011/1/23	0800-0903	14.054	JE1RZR(Manabu)	JL1IRB(Hoz), ZL2AOH(Ralph), JK7UST(Sugi), VK4TJ(John)
318-1	2011/1/22	2300-0000	7.025	JL3YMV/3(Nao)	JK7UTS(Sugi), JJ1TTG/7(Aki)
317-2	2011/1/16	0900-	14.054	JE7YTQ(Sugi)	none
317-1	2011/1/15	2300-0005	7.0262	JL3YMV/3(Nao)	JP1BJB(Aki), JE1TRV(Atsu), JN1RVS/0(Nao), JG0SXC(Man), JJ1TTG/7(Aki)
316-2	2011/1/9	0800-0847	14.054	JE1RZR(Manabu)	G3ASG(Ray), JE1TRV(Atsu)
316-1	2011/1/8	2300-0015	7.026	JL3YMV/3(Nao)	A4MRL(MasaG), JP1BJB(Aki), JK7UST(Sugi), JE1TRV(Atsu), JJ1TTG/7(Aki), JG0SXC(Man), 7N2XUZ(Sam)
315-2	2011/1/2	0800-0817	14.054	JE7YTQ(Sugi)	ZL2AOH(Ralph)
315-1	2011/1/1	2300-2320	7.026	JO3HPM/1(Nao)	none

## **FINALE**

I received emails worry about JA member's safety from FISTS around the world. I appreciate their friendship. Sugi JK7UST lives Natori city where is hit by the disaster. He reported tragic situations to FEA Japanese BBS and finished as follows. “But we try to live by

helping each other.”

From this issue, I became an editor of morsEAsia and plan to publish it in January, April, July, and October. I use a layout of an old KEY NOTE edited by Geo ex-G3ZQS. So, my last words is “73/88 and stay sober de Nao.”

# FISTS CW Club Membership Application

**If this is a renewal or if you have had a FISTS number before, please check here.....**



Call sign: \_\_\_\_\_ Name on the air: \_\_\_\_\_

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This is the helmet from Gil's fire gear. WA1LAD is his ham call, E3 is for Engine 3 (the truck he's assigned to). The rest is a bit of personalization. Just under the right side of the brim, you can see the American flag and POW-MIA patch.

The front cover pic was taken just after Gil exited a house fire. He's in his turn-out gear, wearing a SCBA (self-contained breathing apparatus) and holding his helmet. Notice the plaster on his left arm from the ceiling that had fallen on him while fighting the fire on the second floor. What you can't tell from the pic is it's 85 degrees and pouring rain! It was his last "official" fire as a Private; he was promoted the next afternoon to Lieutenant.

Thanks for all your work for FISTS, Gil, and for your service as a firefighter!